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ABSTRACT

Workshops on child development explored the cognitive development of children, mass media and its effects on children, parenting, the emotional and personality development of children, and educating the exceptional child, including the gifted. The discussion of cognitive development focused on the need to collect information about cognitive competence among Asian children; suggestions were made as to how a research plan might be devised. The discussion of mass media resolved to investigate why some programs and magazines are more popular among children than others. Parenting was discussed in terms of the impact of social change upon Asian families and several general issues were identified as posing particularly urgent practical problems which should be the focus of research. In the workshop on emotional and personality development, discussion centered on the learning process within three basic areas: learning about self, learning to interact with others, and learning to cope with stress. It was recommended that a study be made of children's perceptions of self and others. The discussion of special education concerned classification, diagnosis, treatment or intervention, family role, training, and public policy. Participants focused on practical ways of working within Third World countries and identified research questions contributing to such practice. (RH)

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WORKSHOP I

Main Theme

Child Development

A. Cognitive Development of Children

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E. Education of the Exceptional Child Including the Gifted Child

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1A. Cognitive Development of Children

The workshop sub-theme assigned to the group was 'Cognitive Development of Children'. The discussion focused on the need to collect information about cognitive competence of Asian children. Hitherto, such information was derived from the findings of research which used Western samples, approaches and methodology, and instruments. The problems and issues that emerged were related to:

- (1) Theoretical framework on cognitive development of children developed in the West might not be relevant to examine Asian situations and realities.
- (2) Available instruments were mostly based on Western culture and when used on Asian children, they might not reflect or measure their cognitive competence.
- (3) The English language used in assessing the cognitive competence of children could hinder its accurate assessment. This is especially important in Asia where a variety of language and culture prevails.

In view of the above, the group agreed that a study should be made to chart the cognitive development of Asian children. The findings could be useful for the development of the curriculum and instructional strategies in schools.

The area of study that was identified centred around the investigation of cognitive competence in the following:

problem-finding and problem-solving;
logical thinking;

- creativity;
- decision-making; and
- representational thinking.

The independent variable included:

- sex;
- age (3-7 was chosen because this was considered to be a period of rapid development);
- socio-economic status;
- home environment (both human and non-human inputs);
- language used in assessing cognitive competence;
- home language; and
- urban/rural areas.

The dependent variable to be assessed was cognitive performance in both physical and social domains related to:

- problem finding and problem-solving;
- decision-making;
- creativity;
- representational thinking; and
- logical thinking.

Several approaches and instruments were suggested. They included:

- naturalistic observation in play situations and home environments, etc.;
- semi-structured testings; and
- structured testings.

As for instruments, the following types could be used:

- checklist;
- observation schedules;
- rating scales;
- a battery of tests for representational competence, anticipatory skills, memory and imagery;
- modified Piagetian testing kit; and
- creativity tests following the necessary modifications.

The group also agreed that co-operation among interested nations should be encouraged.

Finally, the group participants discussed ways of facilitating the cognitive development of the children. The discussion was centred around

three areas, namely (1) parental involvement (2) curriculum and teacher training and (3) mass media.

(1) *Parental Involvement*

It seems to us that in Asia, the work of providing activities and an environment that can stimulate the development of cognitive competence in children generally falls on the teachers. It is therefore necessary to convey to the parents that they have a joint responsibility with the teachers in this venture. It is suggested that there should be regular meetings (formal and informal) to which parents can be invited to discuss with the teachers ways of making school experience more relevant and meaningful to the children.

(2) *Curriculum and Teacher Training*

Curriculum for early childhood education should be reviewed every now and then to ensure that the learning experiences provided to the children are meaningful. Together with this, there should be a systematic programme for the training of kindergarten teachers in order to help them to perform their tasks effectively.

(3) *Role of the Mass Media*

Two kinds of mass media were discussed (1) non-printed works like television and radio programmes, and (2) printed materials like books. With regard to the first, it is suggested that there should be more children's programmes that are educational in nature. A similar suggestion can be made for radio programmes. With regards to printed materials like books, it is suggested that good quality books be produced but at a lower price than what they are today. In this way, books can be made available to all children.

In many states, public libraries provide facilities such as children's books and activities like story-telling sessions and painting classes. These facilities can provide useful learning experiences for the children. Parents should be informed of these facilities and be encouraged to bring their children to the libraries.

IB. Mass Media and The Child

The first session began with a 'free association' activity in which participants were invited to jot down words and phrases that came into their thinking in response to the title 'Mass Media' written in the centre of a page. These free associations were then combined by participants in pairs, then in fours, and then in two large groups. The intention was to develop

a combined listing of all the spontaneous thinking so that salient themes might be identified by the group. The issues that emerged at the end of this session and the beginning of the second session are indicated below.

The effect of the child is to be considered in relation to:

- (1) Censorship – who are the censors accountable to?
 - who has control of censorship?
 - what are the choices?
- (2) Role of parents/guardians
- (3) Questions of worthwhileness (i.e. good and bad); the importance of teaching the child to enquire and to make informed choices.
- (4) In a more general sense, what are the criteria on which worthwhileness can be judged? e.g. 'commercialism' and 'consumerism' are being presented as a way of being successful or being modern. So how do we distinguish this from raising the standard of living by promoting the use of recently developed products? Violence and aggression are plentiful but do they have a bad effect?
- (5) Development of critical thinking.
- (6) Are there *any* effects that can be traced to the media themselves?
- (7) Are the mass media mirrors of life in the host culture or are they determinants of it?
- (8) Specific effect on the *Asian* child, with questions of *what* media in *what* social context?
- (9) Effect of desensitising conscience, sense of alarm or moral scruples through repeated exposure.
- (10) Overwhelming effect of foreign ways of life portrayed in the media on our own national culture.
- (11) Do we blame the media for problems just because the media are so visible?

The second session dwelt mainly on the selection of a short list of issues that were causing concern and about which research was needed. The theme for this session became:

'I wish we knew'

- (1) Whether the education of parents in 'media awareness' and child development might have a healthy impact on how children grow and think?
 - (2) How the mass media are 'used' in family life; what does media watching replace in family activities and is this bad?!
 - (3) What a child learns from television?
 - facts)
 - values)
 - thinking processes)
- How do we decide whether it is 'good' or 'bad'?

- (4) Who is making programme decision about content; what groups have access; what is in 'bad taste' and must be censored; what is not in the 'national interest' and should not be shown/printed?
- (5) How ordinary citizens might participate democratically in decisions about the mass media.
- (6) How children's programming on TV might get more political clout, i.e. power in gaining resources (people, time, money).

At the end of the session, participants were asked to rank order the items in importance to each person individually and to bring this ranking to the following session.

At the beginning of the third session, the rank orders were combined. Items 1, 2 and 3 on the above list emerged clearly as the most crucial for the group, with item 4 also being seen as important. General discussion proceeded to suggest recommendations for the sort of investigations that might be carried out to gather information in answer to the main theme 'I wish we knew'. Matters raised included the questions:

What is popular and why, and with what ages and cultural sub-groups?
 Do parents talk about the media and media stories with their children?
 Is this a matter for conversational analysis in the home?
 Which media are effective in doing what and why?
 Parents are to be educated first. The question is how?

In the final analysis, the research issue raised at this point is: Why are some programmes and magazines more popular among children than others? The members present in this fourth session discussed the possible and practical research proposals primarily aimed at two audiences:

Level 1: Teachers and students who would benefit from such research;
 and,

Level 2: Parents and, more importantly, the policymakers.

What Are the Possible Research Areas?

Basically, two important aspects of the mass media were raised.

- (1) What has *appeal*? (for example in the printed media)
- (2) What has *impact*? (for example in the audio and visual media)

Bearing in mind the available research data and findings on these two aspects pertaining to the mass media, the workshop attempted to examine and formulate research methodologies.

What has appeal? (e.g. in magazines)		
Technique	To assess	To or whom By
Survey	Sales of magazines and newspapers	Children of different ages, SES groups and different races
Choosing from a variety of items	Are psychological needs being met?	Children, parents and teachers
Present a single item	Are psychological needs being met?	Ask children What is Ask parents appealing Ask teachers or interesting

What Has Impact? (e.g. in television)

As Judged by Feedback	
Submissions by children	in the form of behavioural response to
Pen pal correspondence	programme content

With a Single Programme

	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Immediate</i>	<i>Long-term</i>
(a)	Pre-test	Attention span, concentration	
(b)	Attitude check (pre)	Programme	Attitude check (post)
(c)	Information (pre)	Programme	Information (post)

With Socio-economic Groups

With money to spend	the appeal of
Without money to spend	fashion to different groups

On Peer Group Preferences

Friends
Strangers
In-group
Cliques

The workshop however concluded its session by posing the following questions:-

- (1) Does television violence really have a negative impact on children?
- (2) Does television 'teach' attitudes?
- (3) Does television 'release' an attitude already presented?
- (4) What is the impact of commercialism, particularly advertisements?
- (5) What is the role of parents in the context of analysing the mass media (which certainly have come to stay)?

Although the group had no opportunity to discuss research methodologies for these questions during the workshop session because of the time factor, the intention here is to provide more research topics for further thought.

IC. Parenting

The primary focus of this workshop was upon the relationship between 'parenting' and social change considered within a general framework which encompassed (1) the child (2) the relationship and mutual influence of the child and those in the 'parenting' role (3) the relationship between mother, father, extended family members, surrogate caregivers etc. and (4) influences from outside the family: social, economic and political.

Within the broad framework of these four topics, the impact of social change upon Asian families was discussed and a number of general issues were identified as posing particularly urgent practical problems which should be the focus of research. Five specific research topics were selected.

Before describing the general issues identified and the research topics selected, a general point must be noted. In the reports from the other workshops, parenting was frequently referred to; it was stressed that parents should be trained, educated and made to alter their behaviour in a variety of ways. This issue of altering the parental behaviour of different cultural and socio-economic groups towards an acceptable model of parenting was discussed at length within the workshop on parenting. The conclusion drawn in our workshop was that we should recognise and accept that other groups may have very different values and attitudes than our own. We should attempt to establish what these beliefs and goals are and respect them rather than assume that our own values and goals should be imposed upon others. It is neither morally nor scientifically acceptable to presume that our own practices should be imposed upon others. It is not scientifically acceptable in the sense that the scientific grounds for presuming that some middle-class practices and beliefs are the most

appropriate for children growing up in a variety of circumstances are not good.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE WORKSHOP

Interaction and Relationship between Parents and Children

- (1) The need for a clearer understanding of parental goals and beliefs and practices within different cultural groups was stressed. This is essential if we are to work with parents faced with the problems of bringing up children in the 1980s and 1990s.
- (2) A number of specific problems were highlighted:
 - (a) Fatalism and ignorance in the face of children's difficulties or problems.
 - (b) An over-emphasis on academic achievement, and an under-emphasis on social/emotional development.
 - (c) Lack of involvement of fathers in children.
 - (d) Sudden changes in parental practices at certain stages of development, for example, the increasing pressure on children at the age of six.
- (3) The importance of taking real account of the mutual influence of child and parent was stressed. Two examples highlighted were:
 - (a) the effects of the child's greater fluency in a second language on the intimacy of the parent-child relationship.
 - (b) the effects of the child's entry into school (influence of school norms and expectations upon the child, then affecting the parent).
- (4) The strengths of Asian families was emphasised in the resilience and strength of the relations between parents and children.

The Family and the Broader Social Context

Specific problems highlighted were:

- (1) The increasing employment of mothers. What are the consequences for children in Asian families? What child-care arrangements are available? What is their quality?
- (2) The breakdown of 'neighbourhoods' and communities and support systems with urbanisation. How does this affect families and children at particular stages of development?
- (3) Problems arising from parents abandoning their responsibility to institutions such as child-care agencies and schools. How can the organisation of child-care provision be improved? In particular, how can the relationship of parents and child-care workers be helped?
- (4) Parental confusion about norms and roles in the face of changing society, new pressures and expectations.

*Relationship Between Parenting/Caregiving Adults: Personality/
Mental State of Parents*

Specific problems highlighted were:

- (1) Problems with the attitudes and behaviour of Asian husbands towards their wives as mothers, as employed persons, as persons attempting to carry out all three roles.
- (2) The contradiction and ambivalence in women's attitudes to being mother, wife and employed person simultaneously. How are these contradictions resolved/faced by Asian women?
- (3) Problems related to the frequently remote and distant relationship between parents and those in caregiving roles in institutions.
- (4) The strength of Asian families was emphasised in the commitment and concern of the extended family.
- (5) In spite of the drive to achieve education and advancement, the strength of Asian families was emphasised in their resistance to divisive social change, their ability to focus on desirable aspects of change but at the same time to maintain family values.

*Dissemination of Research and the Relationship Between Parents,
Practitioners, Researchers and Social Policymakers*

- (1) These issues outlined above are not new. On some of them, considerable research effort has been expended and reports and social policy documents are available. However, the findings and implications of these reports rarely reach those for whom they are most relevant. The dissemination of research findings is an urgent practical issue.
- (2) If research is to be conducted addressing the issues outlined, collaboration between academic researchers and practitioners and social policymakers is essential. How can this be achieved in the different Asian countries?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH TOPICS

We selected five topics all of which were aspects of the general theme 'Changes in parental practices'. On these topics, the need is for systematic descriptive and transcultural studies.

- (1) The relation between parental practices and 'surrogate' parents – that is child-care facilities – their quality and organisation.
- (2) The involvement of fathers in child-rearing.
- (3) Parental practices/expectations in relation to academic achievement/emotional development.
- (4) School-home relations, especially with regard to second language.
- (5) The effects of maternal employment on parental practices.

METHODOLOGIES

Three issues were emphasised:

- (1) The importance of employing a variety of methodological techniques to describe parenting behaviour at different levels of analysis.
- (2) The importance of including naturalistic observation in the home.
- (3) The inclusion of parental interviews.

ID. Emotional and Personality Development of Children

Problem

In the workshop on emotional and personality development, discussion centred on the learning process within three basic areas. These were: learning to interact with others; learning about self; and learning to cope with stress.

Learning to Interact With Others

Several questions were examined, namely: What are the processes underlying a child's ability to interact effectively with significant others such as parents, parent-substitutes, siblings, teachers, peers, etc.? What are the social skills that are prerequisites for effective interpersonal interaction and how are they learned? What is the relationship between a child's ability to form friendships and the development of interpersonal awareness? Why do some children develop feelings of vulnerability and begin to use inappropriate interpersonal strategies that lead them to being neglected or rejected by their peers? One area of concern was the child's ability to communicate freely and clearly. Here, we concentrated upon the possible relationship between the expression of feelings and emotions appropriately and effective communication. In particular, we were concerned about children who, because of generalised feelings of interpersonal vulnerability, expressed inappropriate non-verbal communication cues such as anxiety, fear or hesitancy that could be misinterpreted by others.

Learning About Self

Here, we examined factors associated with the development of a positive self-concept and conversely those associated with the development of low self-esteem. Such issues as self-direction, motivation, creativity and sex-role identification were explored. The importance of the link between how one feels about one's self and the extent to which we can express appropriate feelings and emotions in everyday social situations was underlined.

Learning How to Cope With Stress

Why do some children have difficulty in coping with stress? What are some of the sources of stress? After much discussion, the group concluded that learning to express feelings was a major factor in how children managed to cope with stress. In particular, it was felt that children needed to learn how to readily express feelings of anxiety, frustration or disappointment, boredom or loneliness, and happiness. A number of sources of stress were suggested, namely: separation from parents (divorce, death, psychological, etc.); concern about bodily appearance and functions; an over competitive environment; and family socialisation and disciplinary practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In making recommendations, the group focused on the importance of the role of the adult such as parents, teachers, etc. who, by either direct teaching or by serving as suitable models, helped the child to learn how to interact with others, to learn about self, and to learn how to cope with stress. Thus significant others could help by:

- (1) Opening up communication channels with children.
- (2) Encouraging and guiding children to express their emotions honestly; to direct feelings of anger, frustration or disappointment towards the situation rather than towards themselves or others; to express happiness as well as unhappiness.
- (3) Encouraging children to express affection for others both verbally and physically.
- (4) Encouraging desirable behaviour by positive reinforcement and discouraging undesirable behaviour by positive rather than negative means.
- (5) Recognising the strengths and accept the weaknesses of the child.
- (6) Encouraging responsibility in the child.
- (7) Providing guidelines on ethical and moral behaviour.

IMPLEMENTATION

As with the recommendations, the group focused on how adults could assist children to learn the skills associated with interaction with others, acceptance of self and stress management. In particular, we felt that the answer lay in education for parents and others. Steps in implementation could include the following:

- (1) Government agencies, private organisations etc. could, in consultation with a team of experts in child care and development, organise

or sponsor courses in effective 'parenting' not only for parents but also for others who are closely associated with the care of children.

- (2) In educational institutions, the extension of counselling programmes in schools, a strong emphasis on personal development in school curricula, and a strong focus on child care and development in teacher training programmes are also recommended.
- (3) Publishers be encouraged to seek experts in the field to write articles and books on child care and development in the Asian context.
- (4) Publishers be also encouraged to produce series of self-instructional books on personal development for children. Such books could be patterned on existing material, such as 'Who am I?', 'What am I?', 'Why am I?' and 'How am I?'. Of course, such material should be modified and adapted for the Asian context.
- (5) Organise community-based educational projects for children which would involve them in the care and development of their own environment.
- (6) Build recreational facilities and organise projects to encourage effective uses of leisure and provide opportunities for dissipation of any pent-up frustration.

PROPOSALS FOR RESEARCH

Before such recommendations could be implemented in an Asian context, we felt that it was essential to initiate a research programme in order to further our knowledge of the child's perceptions of self and others. Thus we suggested that interview, observational and questionnaire techniques be used to assess the following:

- (1) How do children make friends? To what extent can current research into stages of children's friendship expectations be applied to the Asian context? What is the nature of the relationship between a child's perception and self, and his or her ability to interact appropriately with significant others?
- (2) What problems do children perceive are associated with their learning about self, interacting with others and coping with stress?

In addition, we felt that the above techniques could also be used in order to explore parental perceptions and expectations, viz.:

- (1) What problems do parents perceive their children have in learning about self, interacting with others and coping with stress?
- (2) What are the effects of differences in parenting environments? For instance, what similarities and dissimilarities exist between single-parent and two-parent families? What effects do single environments have on a child?

Collection of these data could be used for adult education namely:

- (1) The development and evaluation of television programmes, manuals etc. that would be aimed at teaching adults the skills associated with effective parenting.
- (2) The development of methods that could assist mothers in need such as those in rural areas to develop a child's potential (e.g. creativity, self enhancement) during the first two years of life and childhood.

In addition, these data could be used for child education, viz.:

- (1) The development and evaluation of television programmes that could teach children the skills associated with co-operation, competition, altruistic and helping behaviours, and acceptance of self and others. The project could possibly involve the adaptation/modification of existing programmes such as 'Sesame Street' to fit the Asian context.
- (2) The production of a series of self-instructional books on personal development. Such books could be patterned on existing material, e.g. 'Who am I?', 'What am I?', 'Why am I' and 'How am I?'. This material would need to be adapted to suit the Asian context.
- (3) The development of appropriate play materials utilising indigenous elements for children of various age levels and environments.

IE. Education of the Exceptional Child Including the Gifted Child

INTRODUCTION

After considerable discussion regarding the definition of the field of education of the exceptional child, it was decided that in spite of the diversity of classification of special children, there are at least six areas of concern that cut across the diverse populations. These are: classification, diagnosis, treatment or intervention, family role, training and public policy.

The objectives of the workshop, then, were two-fold (a) to focus on the practical ways of working within the so-called third world countries and (b) to identify a number of research questions that would contribute to such practical work. These two objectives guided the discussion in each of the categories.

Classification

The definition of the special child posed some challenge to the group. While some of the categories like 'mental retardation' seemed clear-cut, we realised, as we proceeded, that the definition is not independent of the types of tests used. So we listed the traditional categories of 'special' child.

The following categories were identified including mental retardation, learning disabilities, behaviour disorders, gifted and talented, sensory motor difficulties (hearing and vision) and physical handicaps.

Although these types were identified, the issue is how to generate a battery of reliable and valid tests to diagnose not only the particular deficit but also its depth and extent.

While we could identify an array of tests, the issues discussed under diagnosis persisted, namely, how to develop standardised tests which are relevant for particular cultures and how to evaluate teacher-based rating scales and observation.

To accomplish the objective of creating instruments requires clear concept of expected intellectual, social and biological status of the child. Much time is needed to arrive at good models of behaviour and specify the kinds of behaviours and abilities needed for school functioning.

Diagnosis

The issue here is whether to use existing tests and evaluation instruments or develop new ones appropriate to not only particular types of children but also to particular cultural and ethnic groups.

The group felt that reliable and valid diagnostic instruments are preferred for screening and diagnostic purposes. However, the group also realised the immediate need for such instruments and it was suggested that a two-pronged approach be undertaken:

- (1) employ qualitative analysis as needed; and
- (2) develop and/or adapt instruments as needed.

As can be seen from the list below of different types of instruments suggested as generally useful, it is apparent that adaptation of American and British standardised instruments are possible. However, rating scales (teacher and/or parent), or classroom observations are types of techniques that might prove useful. Examples of some of the tests mentioned are:

- (1) Cattell Cultural Fair Intelligence Test
- (2) Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale
- (3) Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-R)
- (4) Raven's Colored Progressive Matrices/Standard Progressive Matrices

Special recommendation was given by Dr. Sigel on the use of Raven's Standard and Colored Progressive Matrices because of (1) cultural-free (2) every item has its own psychological meaning so error analysis is a useful strategy; and (3) group test.

Gifted and Talented

Although giftedness at first seems simple, we readily became aware of the complexities of definition and of measurement. We sought to include in our conception not only IQ, but also talent and creativity. Each of these factors is important. The task is to devise measures for each and this posed problems. The group agreed that assessment of thinking abilities is needed and felt that being with such concepts as development and convergent thinking might be useful.

Here again, we were faced with identification of the child's status and concluded there are some tests where we minimise cultural factors, for example, the Raven Test of Progressive Matrices.

Treatment and Remediation for Gifted Children

- (1) Special curriculum.
- (2) Consultation with parents.
- (3) Educational opportunities:
 - express classes
 - special classes
 - enrichment materials
 - withdraw system.
- (4) Organisation of school programmes to meet the needs of these students.

Role of Parents

- (1) Parental involvement; and
- (2) Parental needs: for parents to understand their children's problems and services/resources available for them.

Policy and Legal Responsibilities of the School and Government

Parents should know the rights of their children guaranteed by law.

SUMMARY

In general, three major issues permeated our discussion:

- (1) Finding the best tests and/or procedures for diagnosis and classification.
- (2) Developing appropriate educational and/or remediation programmes for the children.

- (3) How to get the necessary information to answer questions 1 and 2. This last point led us to ask a number of research or data-based questions. Research questions dealt also with the investigations of underlying factors in the family, school and community.

Specific Research questions are:

- (1) Evaluation effectiveness of remediation and/or educational programmes of 'special children'.
- (2) Identify the role of the family in influencing a special child's life, e.g. parental values and beliefs regarding children's special needs.
- (3) Construct appropriate educational measures of intellectual, social and personality variables.
- (4) Undertake cross-cultural studies on each of the above.
- (5) Examine development of children with handicaps in terms of personal-social variables.

The group felt that cross-cultural research was very important and useful to encourage such efforts. However, they also felt that much more work and time has to be spend in developing communication channels among the various countries represented at ISSBD.